

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy

2019

Enhanced Pedagogy FLC: Differentiating the First Year Honors Curriculum

Megan Zane
006173163@csusb.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/q2sep>



Part of the [Philosophy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Zane, Megan, "Enhanced Pedagogy FLC: Differentiating the First Year Honors Curriculum" (2019). *Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy*. 47.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/q2sep/47>

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

Enhanced Pedagogy FLC: Differentiating the First Year Honors Curriculum

Megan Zane

Below is a general summary of what I take to be the main conclusions of our FLC regarding how the First Year Honors Curriculum is distinctive, the specific ways these conclusions have influenced my own course design, and one suggestion for further development of the program.

General Conclusions:

In general, the participants of the FLC agreed that what primarily differentiates courses in the Honors Curriculum from similar courses on campus is the deliberate integrative context provided by the curriculum's structure. Courses, and disciplines, are standardly presented to students and treated by faculty and the university as discrete units. In contrast, the Honors Curriculum has the valuable opportunity to provide an integrative context for its individual courses and student work. Students encountering courses in this context are much more likely to view them as pieces of a more complicated whole. This reinforces the lesson that what students learn in one course and discipline is often useful in other courses and contexts. It gives them the opportunity to return to questions at different times and with different methodologies in ways and moments that are determined by the students themselves.

In this way, the structure of the curriculum itself supports student integrative learning and metacognition, two ways to encourage students to take active roles in their educations. The curriculum provides a foundation for students and faculty to think deliberately about how specific coursework contributes to larger projects. Furthermore, the cohort experience encouraged by the program offers students a community of peers with shared reference points. This reinforces the program's presentation of knowledge production and inquiry as collaborative and constant. In general, this curriculum encourages students to view education and knowledge production as multifaceted projects that require flexibility and their personal engagement.

Individual faculty can reinforce these aims by designing their courses in ways that take advantage of the specific context of the Honors Curriculum. We can highlight the commonalities between courses and disciplines by explicitly suggesting students use work from other Honors courses or use reflective assignments to encourage students to more actively consider their own relationship with course material and methodologies. The value of these types of assignments increases as students repeatedly encounter them in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. This repetition helps students

recognize common tools in knowledge production being used in different ways. It also gives students the opportunity to recognize when these tools are being used in contradictory ways. When we make plain the inevitable discord between different scholarly approaches, we can better show students the contingent choices of scholarship. Students witnessing this agency encourages them to cultivate their own engagement with the processes of knowledge production.

Personal Course Design:

After considering the many benefits of integrative learning and the important role metacognitive reflections can play in such learning, I plan to adjust my current assignments and in-class activities to make their reflective and integrative aspects much more explicit. I also intend to include short reflective assignments much more often. Since critical thinking is itself directed at metacognition, the integrative emphasis of the Honors Curriculum is well suited to drawing attention to the specific ways in which critical thinking is widely applicable.

Suggestion for Further Development:

One idea discussed by the FLC that I think has a lot of potential is encouraging more of a community for faculty teaching in the program. Some structural components that maintain such a community would provide general support for faculty and also make it easier for faculty to build on the many connections possible between courses and further reinforce integrative learning. Having more specific ideas of the work students do in other Honors courses allows faculty to make more deliberate and explicit choices in their own classrooms. If we want students to see inquiry and knowledge production as collaborative, contingent, and constant, we can best model this for students by actually participating in such a community. This could be accomplished in a number of ways including:

- Online spaces dedicated to faculty communication such as shared online folders of assignment examples and reflective questions, or discussion boards/group chats, which allow faculty to support and collaborate during the semester.
- Occasional in-person meetings, such as a beginning of the year get-together.
- Occasional symposiums where students can observe faculty member's different views and approaches to shared questions.